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ABSTRACT

This study traces the major programs and factors which contributed to the development of physical education in New England schools and academies between 1789 and 1860. First, the major types of physical exercise programs and the schools in which these programs operated are presented. Types of exercise programs identified include military training and exercise, gymnastics, manual training, domestic economy, calisthenics, and sports and games. Second, the major factors identified as influencing the development of physical education in New England between 1789 and 1860 are listed. They include the following: (1) concern for the health of students, (2) major contributions toward the implementation of physical education by such educators as Horace Mann, (3) influence exerted by school leaders to bring about school reforms including reforms in physical education, and (4) the inclusion, in public schools, of physical exercise programs that had been previously used in academies and private schools. In conclusion, the author states that the time period between 1789 and 1860 was one of testing various physical exercise programs as a means of providing for the healthful physical development of students, and that many of the present day physical education concepts and activities can be traced to those begun in New England during this time. (MK)

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PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN NEW ENGLAND SCHOOLS AND ACADEMIES FROM 1789 TO 1860: CONCEPTS AND PRACTICES. Roxanne M. Albertson; University of Bridgeport.

The purpose of this study was to trace the major physical education concepts and programs in New England schools and academies between 1789 and 1860. Sub-problems included determining major types of physical education programs advocated and included in schools and academies, individuals and programs that influenced implementation of exercise programs, and ideas and events that contributed to changes in physical education concepts and practices.

The research was conducted in New England libraries and historical societies and the Library of Congress. The data was gathered from state and city documents, educational leaders' personal papers, school catalogues, education journals, and newspapers and magazines. The information was organized and presented according to major types of physical exercise programs advocated and the schools in which these programs were provided. Types of exercise programs identified included military training and exercises, gymnastics, manual training, domestic economy, calisthenics, and games and sports.

Alden Partridge advocated military exercises to develop healthy vigorous students, to keep them from immoral diversion, and to prepare them to defend the country. The military exercise and pedestrian excursion

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program at American Literary, Scientific and Military Academy (1820-1828) was one of the earliest supervised physical exercise programs in New England. Other academies included military exercises and drills primarily as a means of disciplining students during nonschool hours. Military exercises were not added to public school programs until after 1860.

German gymnastics reached their peak of popularity between 1825 and 1835. Round Hill School (1823-1834), with its gymnastic program under Charles Beck's supervision, became a model for similar programs. After 1835, though few educators continued to advocate German gymnastics, these activities continued to be provided in some academies for students' recreational use. During the 1850's Swedish and Dio Lewis gymnastic systems were advocated for Boston area public schools. Lewis's system of school gymnastics was introduced in some New England public schools during 1860 because the exercises could be performed in school rooms by both male and female students without the use of heavy apparatus.

During the 1830's manual training for boys and domestic economy for girls were recommended as utilitarian physical exercises that would aid in reducing educational expenses while preparing students for future occupations. Labor programs were included in sectarian academies and seminaries. Gardiner Lysceum and Mount Holyoke Female

Seminary had the most extensive and successful labor programs. Few students enjoyed the drudgery of physical labor and interest in these programs diminished in most schools after 1840.

Catharine Beecher, through her calisthenic program at Hartford Female Seminary and her books describing her exercise system, became New England's foremost calisthenic advocate between 1825 and 1860. Teachers used her manuals on the methods of teaching calisthenics for their school programs because the exercises could be performed by children of both sexes in small confined school rooms. By 1860 calisthenics had become a commonly used method of exercise in public elementary schools and female seminaries throughout New England.

Samuel Moody and Timothy Dwight advocated and included sports and games in their school programs for their physical exercise benefits prior to 1800. Though swimming, fencing, and horseback riding were included in many academies prior to 1840, schools included these activities as "social accomplishments" rather than for their healthful exercise benefits. Frederick Gunn was one of the earliest educators to include sports as an integral part of his program at the Gunnery in 1850. Between 1840 and 1860 games and sports, including clubs and athletic competition, were being organized by students in many schools. At most schools and

academies sports and games were considered healthful recreational activities but were not a part of the educational programs before 1860.

Major factors identified as influencing the development of physical education in New England between 1789 and 1860 were:

1. The concern for the health of students was the pervading influence throughout the period. As a result of this concern there was a gradual acceptance by New England educators of the school's responsibility for the healthful physical development of students.

2. Horace Mann, Henry Barnard, William Alcott, Catharine Beecher, and Thomas Higginson, made major contributions toward the implementation of physical education in schools and academies. Each stressed the need for providing systematic physical exercise programs supervised by trained teachers in each New England school.

3. After the establishment of State Boards of Education the public school leaders exerted an increased influence in bringing about school reforms including the provision for physiology and physical education in school curricula. Through the efforts of state education officials physical education became an accepted school subject in many New England schools.

4. Physical exercise programs were first introduced

in academies and private schools. Few of the early programs were adapted for public school use and diminished in popularity with the increase in public school influence after 1840. Later programs, including calisthenics and school gymnastics, were adapted for public school use and became increasingly accepted as physical education activities in New England by 1860.

5. The time period between 1789 and 1860 was one of testing various physical exercise programs as a means of providing for the healthful physical development of students. The period was an innovative period in American physical education heritage. Many of the present day physical education concepts and activities can be traced to those begun in New England during this earlier period. These early ideas put forth by educational leaders and the programs instituted in New England schools and academies formed the basis upon which many of the present day concepts and programs in physical education are founded.

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